

Editorial Board: National Brigade (East)

Guardian East

Volume 10, Issue 17

July 14, 2004



Soldiers at Play:

FUN ON THE 4th

page 12

Message to the troops



By Col. Kevin Larson

A few weeks ago the citizens of the United States of America celebrated the 228th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Celebrations took place across the country – in large cities and in small towns.

The words that inspired the citizens of the 13 colonies 228 years ago can still inspire us today: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

We joined in the celebration of Independence Day here at Camp Bondsteel and Camp Monteith. No,

we didn't get to see fireworks – but we had the Statue of Liberty and other decorations in our dining facilities. We had cakes prepared with special greetings – God Bless America! Happy 228th Birthday! July 4, 1776! We had sports events and a concert. The Declaration of Independence was read at worship services.

And it wasn't just us Americans celebrating – the people of Kosovo joined us in our Fourth of July celebrations! A number of us had the opportunity to attend a reception hosted by the United States Office in Pristina. Hundreds of Kosovars attended – including the President of Kosovo, many other political leaders, business leaders, community leaders, and religious leaders. Many more of our international friends attended – Soldiers from many of the nations that are participating in KFOR.



**Col.
Kevin Larson**

We are here in Kosovo as representatives of the United States of America. Even though we are not on American soil we are part of our country every day. Our entire brigade has made our nation proud. Every day our men and women are demonstrating the traits that make the United States great.

People in Kosovo look up to us because we are part of the United States. Our goal in this mission is to help our friends, all the people of Kosovo. That's the goal of every Soldier in MNB(E), no matter what job they are doing. Our goal is to help all the people of Kosovo.

It's wonderful celebrating the Fourth of July with family and friends. This year we were away from our families, but we still had the opportunity to celebrate with friends – our fellow Soldiers and the people of Kosovo.

SEE THE PHOTO OF THE DAY

www.mnbe.hqusareur.army.mil



Submissions or story ideas related to the MNB(E) mission are encouraged. Send regular mail to MNB(E) PAO, Attn: Editor, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340; send e-mail to guardianeast@bondsteel2.aur.army.mil.

COVER: Staff Sgt. Elie Jean-Baptiste goes to the hoop during the three-on-three basketball tournament held on Camp Bondsteel July 4th.

Photo by Spc. Rob Barker.
See page 12 for more photos

Guardian East

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About Guardian East

Guardian East is an official publication of KFOR Multi-National Brigade (East) produced to provide command information to service members in MNB(E). Guardian East is produced by the 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Army National Guard, Baltimore, Md. Contents of Guardian East are not necessarily official views, nor endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army or the 34th Infantry Division. Guardian East is published biweekly using offset press by the MNB(E) Public Affairs Office, Building 1320, Camp Bondsteel, APO AE 09340. Printed circulation is 3,000.



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Task Force Desperado Soldiers keep aircraft flying while in Kosovo.

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Combat Stress Team

Sgt. Kevin Coder enjoys working with Soldiers, something he gets to do daily as part of the Combat Stress Team.

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Sgt. Kris Schaff, a military police officer with the 192nd MP Detachment, searches a truck leaving Camp Bondsteel during a routine law and order patrol. Photo by Spc. Sean McCollum. See page 8 for the story.



Spc. Christopher Owen, an armament technician with Tango Troop, 4-278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, performs a head space and timing check on an OH-58D Kiowa Helicopter's .50 Caliber Machine Gun.

Working Behind^{The} Scenes

Churning blades, rotor wash, wires, weapons systems and much more are usually part of a normal day with helicopter mechanics. With a tight schedule and plenty of helicopters to work with, mechanics of Tango Troop, 4-278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, are prepared to do their job for the mission.

The unit has several different missions when it comes to the helicopters. They can range from scheduled inspections, to armament calibration, to repairing aircraft in the field. With every aircraft, safety is the main priority, said Sgt. 1st Class Eric Petersen from Anchorage, Alaska, and the maintenance platoon sergeant with the unit.

"It is an awesome responsibility and you are asking yourself questions all the time, always going through a checklist in your head," said Petersen.

After months of working with the helicopters here, the work may seem routine, but Petersen said the mechanics stay alert and are ready for anything.

"You don't know what's going to happen from day to day," said Petersen. "It's not like your car where you can just fire it up."

While the work is fairly clear-cut, the lack of supplies that occasionally happens during a deployment can cause delays in work getting done.

"There's nothing hard with the engines themselves," said Sgt. Bryan Pittman, a mechanic with the 4-278th and resident of Knoxville, Tenn.

"They're all straightforward and easy engines to work on. It's just some of the stuff we have back home we don't have here and have to make do or have to order new tools and stuff."

Another challenge is if a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team has to go out to fix an aircraft in the field and get it back to Camp Bondsteel.

"We have DART teams which are designated people set up if something happens to an aircraft outside the wire and we have to go out and fix the problem," said Petersen. "It can be a very challenging job depending on what time of day it is and the location of the aircraft. We have two hours to respond to a downed aircraft but we have never taken more than an hour."

Another job that brings a thrill for some is working with the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior weapons system while at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point, said Maynardville, Tenn., resident Spc. Brad Gray, an armament technician with the unit.

(See *MECHANICS* page 20)

**Story by Spc. Tim Grooms
photos by Spc. Luke Rollins**

Swapping Soldiers

Story and photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

For some Soldiers in Multi-national Brigade (East) when someone says Sweden the first things to come to mind may be Volvos, Swedish fish—the fish-shaped chewy candy—and the Swedish Chef from The Muppet Show. But other Soldiers recently learned a lot more about Sweden than automobiles and chewy candy.

Soldiers from the Swedish Battalion, whose sector covers areas in and around Pristina/Prishtina in Multi-national Brigade (Central), recently spent time patrolling in MNB (East) with Soldiers from Bravo Troop, 1-113th Cavalry. While Bravo Troop worked with the Swedish soldiers here, Soldiers from Alpha Troop, 1-113th Cavalry, spent time in MNB (C) working out of Camp Victoria, the Swedish camp.

For both the Swedish and American soldiers the experience proved to be a positive one.

“I think this is a great experience,” said Spc. Larry Miller, a scout from Des Moines, Iowa, with Alpha Troop. “Being in a different part of Kosovo, it’s a good change.”

“It’s good to see new places,” agreed Swedish army Pvt. Henrik Vahlby. “And it’s good to meet new people.”

Meeting new people and learning about each other was something else about the experience that many of the participants said they found rewarding.

“One of the best parts about the experience was getting to interact with the Swedish soldiers,” said Miller, who added that it gave them the chance to get to know the Swedish soldiers “on a different level than just waving to them as we’re walking down the road.”

During their time in MNB (C), the Soldiers from Alpha Troop worked primarily guarding churches, conducting vehicle checkpoints and observing traffic along Route Hawk. On a normal, day-to-day basis they didn’t work hand-in-hand with the Swedish soldiers as those from Bravo Troop did, but both groups spent time comparing weapons, equipment and vehicles.

“It’s a lot better than ours,” said Spc. David Bollenbaugh, a scout from Ogden, Iowa, with Bravo Troop, describing a Swedish military vehicle. “For one, it has air conditioning and a stereo.”

For those in Alpha Troop, comparing weapons came during a shared range with the Swedish soldiers, and they said they found few differences between the American and Swedish weapons.

“I think they are pretty similar,” said Miller. “As far as accuracy and functionability go, but theirs break down [for cleaning] easier than ours. And, as far as parts, theirs are easier to clean than ours.”

In addition to comparing equipment, the soldiers from both countries got to experience life in a foreign camp.

“There’s no Thai massage,” said Miller, noting one of the differences between Camp Monteith and Camp Victoria. “But you’ve got saunas you can use. That’s better than Monteith.”

And the Swedish soldiers at Camp Monteith found a few differences as well.

“The food is better,” said Swedish Army Pvt. Noren Jörgen. “There are more choices. We only have one main dish and salads at our camp.”

Another difference Jörgen noted was the choice of recreation activities at Camp Monteith.

“There are sports fields and the movie theatre. We don’t have that,” said Jörgen.

And the Soldiers have discovered something else while working with the Swedish.

“The [Swedish soldiers] I’ve met are nice people, laid back and they know their jobs,” said Miller. “And from talking with them and getting to know them, I’ve found out they’re not much different from us.”

And, that, perhaps, is one of the goals of the two groups of Soldiers working together.



Sgt. Nathan White, left, and 1st. Lt. Timothy Creasman, both of Alpha Troop, 1-113th Cavalry, make their way through a field after assisting Soldiers at a vehicle checkpoint on Route Hawk in Multi-national Brigade (Central)'s area of responsibility.

CAMP BONDSTEEL'S **LAW & ORDER**

Story and photos by Spc. Sean McCollum



Sgt. Joshua Titus, a military police officer with the 192nd MP Detachment, checks the speed of passing cars during a routine law and order patrol on Camp Bondsteel.



Two words could sum up the job of the Military Police officers of the 192nd MP Detachment (Provost Marshal): law and order. The sheriff's deputies of the little town known as Camp Bondsteel patrol inside and outside the wire to enforce traffic safety, keep the peace, and of late much more.

On the grounds of Camp Bondsteel, Sgt. Joshua Titus a military police officer from Ainsworth, Neb., drives his green Mitsubishi Montero just under 16 mph/25 kph, depending on where he is. He stops every once in a while, puts his radar gun in hand and turns the radio to the country music station. Titus waves to every passing car, trying to maintain good relations as he does his job. Walking patrols see Titus shaking hands and talking with shop owners of the photo studio and press shop. Public relations, Titus said, is one of the main jobs of the MPs.

While Soldiers like Titus keep watch inside Bondsteel, other Soldiers from his unit are maintaining law and order outside the wire. The MPs try to maintain law and order on the streets of Kosovo, although the focus of that mission was changed since the riots in March.

"Originally we were supposed to enforce traffic safety and speed limits within MNB(E) for all KFOR vehicles. It's evolved since after the riots," Said Staff Sgt. Mark Hardesty, the noncommissioned officer in charge of one of the patrols who is from Lincoln, Neb. "We investigate a lot of possible tension points throughout MNB(E) and report it to higher. Things from business checks to human trafficking to illegal farming and anything you can name."

The work of the unit has put them in frequent contact with the Kosovo Police Service to achieve mutually beneficial ends. In one patrol, the KPS gave a guided tour to the MPs so the Soldiers could update an off-limits site. Another joint effort resulted in a stolen-vehicle recovery program held in various cities across Kosovo. The MPs, said Hardesty, provide KFOR presence as the KPS pulls over expensive late-model vehicles and run their vehicle identification numbers through the European Union database to find vehicles stolen from other countries and brought to Kosovo for resale.

In addition to a close relationship with the KPS, Hardesty said the best part of his job is the diversity of missions.

"We really get to reach out and touch the corners, meet the people, get comfortable with all the different towns on each end," Hardesty said. "Lots of pictures and lots of memories."

Whether it be on the streets of Ferizaj/Urosevac, the Bondsteel PX, or anywhere else in MNB(E), the sheriff's deputies of the Provost Marshals Office are there to keep a watchful eye on the safety and security of Soldiers and civilians in Kosovo.



Sgt. Andrew Phillips, a military police officer with the 192nd MP Detachment, scans the actions of truckers leaving Camp Bondsteel during a routine law and order patrol.

MNB (E) servicemembers ce

4th of J

**Weekend with outdoor
held at Camps Bonds
Monteith**



*Senior Airman Julie Bartlein, a weather fore-
caster with Detachment 2, 401st Air Expedi-
tionary Wing, pitches a softball during Camp
Bondsteel's one-pitch softball tournament
held on July 4th. Photo by Spc. Rob Barker.*

celebrate

July

activities
steel and





Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Dunking Tank



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

Soccer Tournament



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Volley Ball



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

Volley Ball



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

One-Pitch Softball



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

3 on 3 B-Ball



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

Volley Ball



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

Soccer Tournament



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

One-Pitch Softball



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

One-Pitch Softball



Spc. Matthew Olsen, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry, scans a wooded area in Sasare/Shashare, a town on the Kosovo border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for illegal wood cutting.

SMUGGLING Interdiction

STORY AND PHOTO BY SPC. ROB BARKER

Finding illegal woodcutters in Kosovo is like finding a needle in a haystack, according to a group of Soldiers from Alpha Company, 2-135th Infantry, who spent the day hiking through the woods near the village of Sasare/ Shashare looking for any type of smuggling activity on the border with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

"We are looking for anyone who is bringing drugs over the border, or illegally cutting wood," said Sgt. Sean Staum, a squad leader with Alpha Company and resident of St. Paul, Minn. "We are checking to see if anything is being smuggled that could be harmful to residents, troops or the economy."

Although finding smugglers and illegal woodcutters is difficult, the Soldiers said it is important work.

"Smuggling goods across the border with the FYROM is detrimental to the development of Kosovo for two key reasons," said 2nd Lt. Joel Krech, a rifle platoon leader with the company. "One, it deprives the civil authorities of much needed tax revenue that is normally collected at the legal border crossing points. Two, since smugglers do not pay a tariff on their goods, the smuggled goods are usually cheaper to the consumer, and the importers who bring goods in to Kosovo legally then have to compete with the smugglers who can offer lower prices.

"This discourages the kind of business practices that are essential for the future of Kosovo," added the Oakdale, Minn. resident.

The illegal woodcutting troubles Kosovo's future for different reasons.

"The woodcutting depletes a natural resource while only benefiting a few," said Krech. "And the woodcutters have no plans for planting trees to replace the ones they cut."

Midday, the Alpha Company troops received some help from the air when two OH-58D Kiowa helicopters from Task Force Desperado arrived.

"You are limited on what you can see while patrolling on foot," said Sgt. Charles Letness, an M-240 gunner with the company, who resides in Minneapolis, Minn. "Anytime you can utilize air assets while patrolling, it is very helpful."

"They can see what we can't see," said Spc. Robb Lutz, a driver with the company. "Their line of sight is further than ours and they also have better night capabilities through night and thermal vision."

The helicopters and pilots add another piece to the puzzle, said the group.

"It enhances the team," said Staum. "They've got eyes-on capabilities, but they do not have the ability to stop and detain the offenders."

The helicopter's goal is to provide an extra set of eyes on the border, said Staum, but they are also helping the team in other ways.

"We know that we are working not only with our squad on a squad type mission; we've got everyone else helping us out too," said Lutz, also a St. Paul, Minn. resident. "We know if we ever did run into any trouble we have overhead cover, as well as what we can provide ourselves."


Teamwork is a key element in squad based missions, added Lutz, and his fellow platoon members agreed.

"The teamwork that has been built in our squad and platoon has been great," said Staum. "I also like the freedom of movement and being able to get away from Bondsteel. This allows me to be motivated about going into sector and completing our mission."



KEVIN CODE

COMBAT STRESS



Sgt. Kevin Coder is in many ways like James Bond, which makes sense since he owns the entire James Bond movie collection. Like Bond, Coder likes to dress with style, and back home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he drives a Ford Mustang, a car many people agree is just as snazzy as the Austin-Healys and BMWs Bond drives, and he's even had a martini or two. Unlike Agent 007, Coder's job here in Kosovo isn't filled with giant explosions and by-the-skin-of-your-teeth getaways, but Coder, a mental health specialist with Combat Stress Control, thinks he has one of the best, most rewarding and interesting jobs in Task Force Falcon.

"I love helping Soldiers," said Coder, summing up the best part about his job "It's a very rewarding job. It's great to be able to help Soldiers come out of a bad situation and reshape their lives and themselves."

Helping Soldiers is Coder's, and CSC's, primary mission here. One of the ways he accomplishes that mission is by identifying items that affect Soldiers deployed here and ensuring they have positive outlets to relieve that stress.

According to Coder, Combat Stress usually interacts with Soldiers in two ways: when Soldiers come looking for help or when a commander directs an evaluation of an individual. However, Coder said he often takes a more proactive approach toward helping Soldiers by joining them on patrols in order to gain insight into what Soldiers' concerns are and find out what the climate is within the unit.

When on a patrol, Coder said he looks for "red flags" such as signs of suicide, extreme battle fatigue and adjustment disorders. Though specifics are kept confidential, if any red flags are seen commanders are notified, Coder said.

But there are other reasons Coder said he joins Soldiers on patrol.

"The key idea behind going on patrols is the fact that most Soldiers won't walk down the hall [to the CSC office] because of negative connotations with psychologists and psychiatrists," he said, adding that some refer to the walk down the hall to the CSC office as the "walk of shame."

Although some people may harbor negative thoughts about psychologists, Coder said he has never received a negative reaction from those he joins on patrol.

"Most are glad to see we care enough to go out with them," he said. "I think they are glad to see that someone cares about them. I've never been greeted with less than open arms."

Besides helping Soldiers, Coder said he has other reasons to join them on patrols.

"I like going on patrol," said Coder. "I can't stand pushing pencils all day. I like being out and being active."

For Coder, who has five years service in the military, the choice to become a mental health specialist was an easy one.

Sgt. Kevin Coder, left, a mental health specialist with Combat Stress Control, speaks with Spc. James Wosika, an infantryman with Alpha Company, 2-136th Infantry, during a patrol near Kamenica/ Kosovska Kamenice. As a way to gain insight into what Soldiers' concerns are and the climate within the unit during deployment, Coder routinely joins Soldiers on patrol. Story and photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy.

"I was always intrigued with the human mind; how it works, why people do what they do," said Coder. "We still don't know everything about the human mind."

That fascination with the human mind has lead him toward earning a bachelor's degree in psychology, and he said after returning from Kosovo he plans to finish the three credits he needs to receive his degree, which also includes minors in bible studies and business, from North Central University in Minneapolis, Minn. Coder said he wants to eventually earn his doctorate degree in psychology as well as continue his work in the military.

"I'd like to go to Iraq," said Coder, noting there is a high demand for mental health specialists there. "The suicide rate is extremely high there, so I'd like to help out and help the troops."

Though he finds the work rewarding, there are parts about the job, and being in Kosovo, that get to Coder.

"Paperwork is the worst part," said Coder. "Besides that, I love it."

And paperwork is probably something even James Bond hates about his job.

(MECHANICS from page 5)

“The exciting thing about working on the FARP is loading underneath the aircraft with the rotor blades turning and loading live rockets,” said Gray. “It is quite an adrenaline rush.”

Spc. David Jonas, a mechanic with Tango Troop and from Chattanooga, Tenn., said some of the most grueling parts of the job are getting to areas of the aircraft that need maintenance.

“It’s a matter of getting to the stuff. The manuals pretty much tell you what to do and once you figure that out it is a matter of getting to what you need to,” said Jonas. “There’s five-minute jobs that can take three hours to do just because there are so many things that lead up to it, like inspections and getting around parts of the aircraft.”

Either going out with a DART, loading rockets, or removing an engine, Soldiers working on aircraft in Tango Troop have a full schedule to keep the helicopters flying. And for some, when the day is over, it is the small things people say that can make their day.

“I just like when someone says I did a good job,” said Jonas. “In the grand scheme of things your job does not seem that significant, but when someone says you did a good job it feels like you are making a difference.”

Spc. Sether Vihauer, an avionics mechanic with Alpha Company, 1-207th Aviation, inspects the mast mounted sight on an OH-58D Kiowa Helicopter.

Getting ready for change

By Chaplain (Maj.) Tom Jensen

Total time for this deployment will be about 11 months, which includes train up in the States and then in Germany. Actual time in Kosovo will be about seven months.

Months away from family, friends, jobs, hearth and home put a strain on relationships. Adjustments are made for those on deployment as well as loved ones at home. It is very difficult to leave home and all that it represents to us – we are involved in community, church and family. We may have agonized over the time that we as Soldiers would be away. For those with young children, changes will be dramatic – children change and grow up so fast, even when it happens right before our eyes we may stand amazed of the rapid advances they make. But it becomes much more apparent when we are away. There will be the need for adjustments when we go home – spouses have learned to carry the load and things may be done differently from what we did or thought we did. We may even wish for the ways things use to be. But then, change happens even when we are at home – the difference is that when we go through it with family, church and community somehow we find it more tolerable since we are a part of that process.

In the upcoming days, unit ministry teams will be presenting reunion briefs for Soldiers within our task forces. Topics will cover adjustment needs due to changes that have happened in Soldiers while in Kosovo and in families and friends back home. Even though we may remember things, as they were when we left, like a picture in our minds taken at the time we left for deployment. But in reality things back home have gone on, without us. Not that we have been forgotten, but family, friends and community continue to go forward in their lives. And we, as Soldiers, have gone through changes as well – adjusting to mission, duty and environment while in Kosovo.

The strategy in mind is to cover major topics that may be faced by Soldiers and family members as Soldiers reintegrate to life back home. It is intended that Soldiers and family will go through a similar program for reunion. Thus, they will know the information shared and awareness basis of each other. The UMTs will be responsible for presenting informational reunion briefs to Soldiers that will deal with relationship challenges to reintegrate into family, friendships and work. Family members will be briefed through the family



**Chaplain (Maj.)
Tom Jensen**

support groups. Topics that will be covered are reunion expectations, children's responses, communication, reestablishing relationships, reunion changes, and reunion stresses at home and work. Our Multi-national Brigade website has the reunion brief information at: <http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil>. On the home page site, Soldiers and family members can click on the topic of "Preparing for Reunion" to obtain practical exercises and a power point presentation. Awareness of these areas will better prepare Soldiers and families to meet the challenges of reunion with understanding and patience with each other.

These are the objection areas of meeting the challenges of reunion, but we, as chaplains and chaplain assistants, will be much in prayer for spiritual renewal and God's power at work in the lives of Soldiers and their families. "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19 – NIV).

In the Master's Hands.

DFAS Unveils Reserve/Guard Pay Center of Excellence

CLEVELAND, OH — DFAS has officially opened the Reserve/Guard Pay Center of Excellence within its Cleveland-based DFAS Military and Civilian Pay Services operation, thus establishing one DFAS location that will furnish pay account support for Army, Air Force and Naval Reserve and Guard Component customers.

The Center is designed to further improve the services DFAS provides to the men and women who defend America. Centralizing all Reserve and Guard pay expertise in one location greatly enhances the sharing of “best practices.” This, in turn, will reap clear benefits in quality of service to DFAS’ Reserve and Guard customers.

“DFAS is constantly striving to improve the way we serve our customers,” said Patrick T. Shine, director of DFAS’ Military and Civilian Pay Services. “This Center of Excellence will make us more responsive to the needs of a critical component of America’s defense—the Reserve and Guard.”

A key feature of the Center is “surge capability.” The cross flow of expertise residing there will allow pay technicians to support more than one service when necessary without adversely affecting other customers. For example, technicians supporting Air Force Guard and Reserve can assist with Army Guard and Reserve activities when required for major deployments of units.

Pay and customer service operations went “live” for the Air Force Reserve Command in the Reserve Pay Center in May. Payroll operations for the Air National Guard will transition next, followed by the Army Reserve and National Guard later, based on continued cooperative efforts with the U. S. Army Financial Management, Reserve and Guard communities.

To make certain the needs of the end customer are being met, this initiative has been closely coordinated with leadership in the Reserve and Guard communities. Their guidance has been critical to the project’s success.

About DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the world’s largest finance and accounting operation. It provides responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the men and women who defend America. In fiscal year 2003, DFAS paid about 5.9 million people, processed more than 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors, disbursed more than \$416 billion and managed more than \$194 billion in military trust funds. For more about DFAS visit

IRR SOLDIERS TO BE MOBILIZED

WASHINGTON - Beginning July 6, the Army will begin notifying approximately 5,600 Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Soldiers of their pending mobilization to active duty in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

Current plans call for IRR Soldiers to be brought on active duty over an extended period in several phased groups, from July through December 2004. The Soldiers will be assigned to designated mobilizing Army Reserve and National Guard units based upon the needs of the Army. Soldiers will be given a minimum 30 days advance notice to report.

The IRR Soldiers will be called up for a minimum of 18 months under Partial Mobilization authority as outlined in Title 10 of the U.S. Code. However, actual periods of service may be adjusted based on the needs of the Army for service of up to 24 cumulative months.

The IRR consists of over 111,000 trained Soldiers (as of May 31, 2004), who are eligible to be called upon to fill vacancies in Army units and may replace Soldiers in Active and Reserve Component units. Part of the Army’s Ready Reserve, the IRR includes individuals who have had training and served previously in the Active Component or the Selected Reserve (such as a member of an Army Reserve unit). Unlike new recruits, these are seasoned, experienced Soldiers who can contribute significantly to Army readiness and operational capabilities. Congress under Title 10 of the U.S. Code mandates the IRR.

Although the Secretary of Defense authorized an involuntary mobilization of IRR Soldiers in January 2004, the Army has made every effort to minimize the call-up’s impact by first contacting individual IRR Soldiers and soliciting volunteers, prior to initiating mandatory call-ups. To date, over 1,000 IRR Soldiers have volunteered to mobilize in support of the GWOT. However, all IRR members may be called upon to serve, at any time, subject to the needs of the Army.

This is not the first time the IRR has been called. During the Gulf War, over 20,000 IRR Soldiers were mobilized and deployed. Since then, there have been several other voluntary and involuntary IRR Soldier call-ups, including 2,533 IRR Soldiers mobilized since Sep. 11, 2001 in the GWOT (226 of which were involuntary mobilizations). The all-volunteer Army is entering one of the most demanding periods in its modern history. Sustained operations are the norm and the need to organize and balance the force between the active and reserve components is critical to meet current mission requirements.

Media questions regarding the ongoing records screening by the HRC-STL should be addressed to the HRC-STL Public Affairs Office (314) 592-0726; pao@arpstl.army.mil. Additional questions and answers regarding this will be placed at a later date on the HRCSTL website: www.hrc.army.mil.

If Soldiers in the IRR desire to volunteer to join a Reserve unit, they may call the Army’s Human Resources Command—St Louis at 1-800-318-5298, or send an email to the appropriate office through the volunteer link on the HRC-STL Web site at www.hrc.army.mil. Soldiers can also contact HRC-STL for a variety of other reasons, for example to update their records, determine their remaining MSO, and learn where vacancies exist in their grade and specialty.

SECTION Q N' A:

SOLDIER

What do you have planned when you get home?

Sgt. Andrew Pelpleymounter

"I plan to jump right back into school when I get home."



Photo by Spc. Tim Grooms

Sgt. Andrew Pelpleymounter, a driver with HHC, 34th ID, prepares to escort the command sergeant major.

Sgt. Christine Matthews

"I plan to spend lots of time getting reacquainted with family and friends while eating enchiladas, lime Tostitos chips, con queso dip, and a strawberry margarita in my right hand."



Photo by Spc. Sean McCollum

Sgt. Christine Matthews, a mail clerk with HHC, 34th ID, stands guard while a UH-60 Black Hawk takes off from a field at the Ramadan Rexhpi school in Sojevo/ Sojeve. Students of the school were able to enter the aircraft cabin when it was stationary.

Staff Sgt. Mike Mobley

"I will be taking my daughter to Dave and Buster's restaurant. She keeps asking to go."



Photo by Spc. Rob Barker

Staff Sgt. Mike Mobley, the EMT NCOIC with Task Force Med Falcon, prepares to shoot the cue ball during a game of eight ball in the South Town Morale, Welfare and Recreation Building.

Sgt. Melissa Redepenning



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soucy

Sgt. Melissa Redepenning, a communications NCO for Charlie Company, 682nd Engineer Battalion, cleans dust and dirt from a SINCGARS radio prior to turning the radio in for inspection and accountability.

"I plan on spending time with my husband and reconnecting with him and seeing where our jobs take us. Right now he works an hour away from where we live and we may be house shopping for someplace closer."

SCENES OF KOSOVO

PHOTO BY SPC. SEAN MCCOLLUM



ST. ANTON'S CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BINAC/ BINAQ